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Music: What twerked, what didn't

Miley and Lorde strip down, not in the same way PAGE 22

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Scary themed runs, backwards running and other questionable fitness trends PAGE 26

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YEAR OF THE CHAMPS

Metro looks at the stories that impacted us in 2013, including the Roughriders' run to Grey Cup glory

Saskatchewan players and personnel celebrate in the locker-room immediately after winning the Grey Cup on Nov. 24. Story, page 29.

LIAM RICHARDS/THE CANADIAN PRESS; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: DAVID VAN DYKE

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REPORT TO THE CITIZENS OF SASKATOON

One year into my fourth term as Saskatoon's Mayor, I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve you. It has been a busy year. We opened Circle Drive South and are moving forward with plans for the Parkway Bridge/Traffic Bridge project. We finalized the 2014 budget. Once again we held my annual Mayor and Council Town Hall Meetings in each of the ten wards.

Over the last ten years Saskatoon has grown and prospered. Our community is home to nearly 40,000 new residents as our population increases toward 250,000. We are a successful, multi-cultural city welcoming families from across Canada and around the world.

New businesses are starting up and existing businesses are expanding. The Conference Board of Canada reports our economy will grow by 5.2% this year with an increase of 6.1% in jobs. That means we are #1 in Canada as we continue to diversify Saskatoon's economy.

Over the past decade we have focussed on improving quality of life, creating opportunities and strengthening infrastructure.

Circle Drive South is open to motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. What a magnificent project. People tell me the Circle Drive South Bridge has changed their lives. It connects neighbourhoods and families, improves productivity by shortening travel times and, finally, completes Saskatoon's circle.

Unprecedented growth of 4% in 2012 saw the near completion of Evergreen and Hampton Village neighbourhoods. Kensington is underway. The massive neighbourhood of Holmwood opens for construction next year. The communities of Elk Point and Aspen Ridge are in the planning stages.

Over the last five years, our nationally-recognized 'Attainable Housing Program' has spurred construction of 2,534 attainable housing units. Over the next 10 years, our goal is to build 5,000 more units.

During the past decade, storm sewer backup was a serious problem in some neighbourhoods. We invested millions of dollars in underground "super collector pipes." They are an effective means of collecting overflow during rain storms so the sewer doesn't back up in your basement.

During the Town Hall meetings you said your top priorities are roads, traffic congestion along with safety and security. I agree. Our roadway network is key. City Council's commitment to spend $250 million dollars over the next 10 years to rehabilitate Saskatoon arterial, collector and neighbourhood streets is absolutely the right thing to do. I want to make sure the city resurfaces the bumpy road in your neighbourhood. In fact within the next three years the city expects to resurface nearly 500 lane kilometers of roadway. That is almost the distance from Saskatoon to Calgary.

City of Saskatoon

To keep Saskatoon moving, we are committed to one of our most important infrastructure projects ever: the Parkway Bridge/Traffic Bridge project. The Parkway will connect the heavily populated northeast neighbourhoods with the employment rich areas of Marquis Industrial. The bridge will carry more than 25,000 commuters every day and dramatically ease traffic congestion on the overburdened Circle Drive North Bridge. The Traffic Bridge must be constructed to accommodate cyclists, pedestrians and vehicles, including transit and emergency vehicles.

Civic construction projects are keeping pace with growth. The new Police Headquarters on 25th Street East will open in the spring. The award-winning Remai Art Gallery of Saskatchewan at River Landing will officially open in 2016. We are on track to relocate the 'bus barns' from Caswell Hill to the new Civic Operations Centre in southwest Saskatoon. When the downtown city yards move, we will begin work on Saskatoon's much anticipated urban renewal program: The Yards. This innovative urban redevelopment alone could see an additional 10,000 people living and working downtown.

Through all of this expansion, the City has maintained a balanced budget. In fact, last year the city had a budget surplus of more than $5 million. We reinvested it in roads, snow removal and put $1.5 million in reserve. Our AAA credit rating from Standard and Poor's proves Saskatoon is a prudent and financially sound city.

As we look to the future we must honour the past. We have a strong and positive relationship with aboriginal communities and First Nations. We must continue to find positive ways to engage young aboriginal men and women creating educational opportunities, and providing an avenue for an active role in the future of Saskatoon.

Like you, I love this city. I want Saskatoon to be the best in Canada. Families are moving here to find success and enjoy the quality of life only Saskatoon offers. We are a city of hope and opportunity and a city in which families feel safe and secure. I want our children and grandchildren to grow up, live, work here and call Saskatoon home. Together we will continue to make Saskatoon, our city, a 21st Century City.

Donald J Atchison

Donald J, Atchison
Mayor of Saskatoon

Local

Metro Saskatoon reporters choose their most impactful stories of 2013.

This photograph, from the Saskatchewan Archives Board Star Phoenix Collection, depicts the first image on record of the Temperance Colonization Society settlers who founded Saskatoon. They are standing on Main Street of Moose Jaw in 1883. SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD STAR PHOENIX COLLECTION

Offing clothes-doffing proves divisive

Petition generated strong reactions. Legacy of temperance colony lives on in Saskatoon's isolation of strip clubs

JACOB MORGAN
Metro reporter

In the middle of Saskatoon's debate about where to put strip clubs, Metro broke a story that struck a nerve.

A petition began circulating in October decrying city council's attempt to banish adult entertainment to heavy industrial areas, saying this would be unsafe for dancers and patrons.

Despite receiving about 200 signatures, the petition failed to dissuade the administration. Come January, all striptease performances will be far from the downtown nightlife, and located among empty plazas and parking lots.

"I think it was a pretty decent showing," said Alexander Falcon, who drafted the document. "That's a large number of people willing to say, 'I'm a customer, I'm against the zoning and I'm willing to say so publicly with my name and address.'"

One Reddit user commenting on the article noted that this isn't the first time Saskatoon has squelched a morally dubious industry with tight regulations.

"Modern day Saskatoon isn't a Temperance Colony like it was in 1883. If we want to progress further into Canada's best city these views need to be retired and left in the past," said yxeninja.

City archivist Jeff O'Brien said anyone buying land from the Temperance Colonization Society (TCS), which founded the town in the early 1880s, had to sign a code stating they would not use liquor.

Ultimately, the temperance movement failed as an economic project, but the ideals lingered.

"Because (TCS members) ended up generally being pillars of the community, this tended to be the attitude towards liquor in Saskatoon for a long time," said O'Brien.

Right up until the mid-20th century, he said, live music, food and even women were not permitted inside of bars.

"The rules were deliberately made so bars were dingy, dreary and unattractive," said O'Brien.

Pastor Tyrone McKenzie of the Lawson Heights Alliance Church, a self-styled prostitution abolitionist, said he understands where council is coming from.

While he believes "clubs that exploit women" shouldn't have any access to the city, he understands that business owners are free to open establishments.

"If we had a preference it would be that there would be a buffer zone and zoning providing safety to children as well as the residents of the city," said McKenzie.

However, as O'Brien pointed out, historically isolating establishments that cater to vice has had unintended consequences.

"You know what happens when you have a dingy, dreary place to drink," he said. "The people who go there — all they do is drink."

Social-media reactions

Metro's original article about the strip-club petition spread quickly on social-media sites Twitter and Reddit as readers from Saskatoon and all over the world chimed in on the issue. Below is a sample of some of those reactions.

Twitter

- **@stripperlols:** That would never happen in Sydney. Australians are a penal colony. Nudity is essential for peace.
- **@wapimaskwa69:** No one's going to hear you scream out there

Reddit

- **Username: AbdulaOblongata. Comment:** The government has no right to force them to move their operations as long as they are conducting their business in a private enclosed establishment... If I don't agree with the practices that go on inside a church, casino, etc., I don't expect them to move their business away to avoided offending me or corrupting my children. I can teach my children morals regardless of the business that operate in the area.
- **Username: Hyperion12. Comment:** Do the industrial workers feel as though it's unsafe?
- **Username: ytde. Comment:** Do the industrial workers have to leave work alone at 3am after spending all night being leered at by drunks?
- **Username: Gunslap. Comment:** I'd sign that petition. Makes a lot of sense to me. Just because some old fogies don't like the idea of strip clubs doesn't mean they should get to block them from being in the city.

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Self-reflection and review at a hidden artistic gem

Skullback Studios. Observations of action and grit at Saskatchewan's future artist colony

MORGAN MODJESKI
Metro reporter

When I heard a couple was creating an artist community in rural Saskatchewan, I was skeptical.

I've heard about these communities but I've never seen one up close, and after driving 40 minutes outside of Saskatoon, I turned down a gravel road where I would soon spot an odd-looking church.

Sitting as if it sprouted from the ground, the building was a massive beacon as if to say, "This is the place."

I had found out about the church prior to seeing it, but had I not, I'd have driven right past the artists' community, known as Skullback Studios, and I think that was the point.

A key aspect of the artist community is their ability to be overlooked. Only those who know would be able to find it, while others wouldn't take a second glance.

Upon arrival, I was invited into the home of the couple spearheading the project, Monique Blom, an artist, and her husband, Shayne Metcalfe, a filmmaker.

Inside, they told me their plans.

Alongside the church, which they had transformed into an art studio and editing suite, the duo wanted to add six more cabins in the next five to 10 years, providing those working at Skullback a long-term place to stay.

To show me their vision, they lead me down grassy trails connecting various campsites to the main house.

Eventually, the trails would lead to cabins where artists would live and create, with Monique and Shayne overseeing the whole thing from their home.

I imagined what it would look like. The two of them looking out a window onto their property, below them, a massive hill covered with forest and nature, alongside half-a-dozen cabins, lit up by creative types pouring their hearts into their work.

It's a funny — and crazy — thing, but it's what they want.

They want creative minds to use their property as an escape, and while the idea of the artists' community and the church was impressive, it was Monique and Shayne that impressed me the most.

It seems while other people with big ideas are too focused on the planning and the how, these two people were working on action, on the now, and as a result, I was shown how an idea becomes reality with grit, enthusiasm and execution.

In their own words

In Skullback, creative minds find a space to flourish

Artists who have done work at and visited Skullback Studios say the project is critical to Saskatchewan, as removing yourself from the distractions of the city is an important part of the creative process.

"You can clear your mind of the clutter and just focus on the thing that you're working on.... You also go to some place that's not familiar. If you're in a familiar environment, you do things the same way, and if you do things in an unfamiliar place — especially if you go out to nature — you're faced really just with yourself."
— Sylvia Ziemann, miniature installation

A still from Amalie Atkins' film, The Braid Harvesters, which was filmed at Paradise Beach just 15 minutes outside of Saskatoon, are pictured above. For the film, Atkins had used the space at Skullback Studios to capture ambient sounds and audio for the film. ALL PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

A miniature sculpture, titled Bunker Commune, was one of the pieces Sylvia Ziemann worked on while at Skullback Studios. Inspired by the H1N1 scare, the piece depicts a Orwellian bunker at the end of the world.

"I find with filmmaking, I start with an image of something and then I'm basically trying to recreate or match that image as much as I can, so being out in the landscape or being in a residency situation, it really just adds richness to your practice."
— Amalie Atkins, multi-disciplinary artist
MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Footage from one of Stephan Fuchs' projects can be seen on one of the many monitors in the editing suite at Skullback Studios.

National Rob Ford, Senate scandal, Toilet Squirrel: 2013 was a big year. Here's the stories that called us to action, made us laugh or impacted our lives in other ways.

Metro story helps mentally ill man secure himself a new home

KATE WEBB
Metro reporter

JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO IN VANCOUVER

'Hundred times better'

When asked to update a story that impacted me over the last year, I Immediately thought of Stephen Chalmers. I interviewed him again last month.

The walkway up to his new trailer sparkles with red and blue Christmas lights, and on clear nights moonlight spills through tall pine trees onto the quiet campground where he has lived for nearly two months now.

The 54-year-old is still getting used to his new surroundings after moving out of a dilapidated trailer at the run-down Beladean Trailer Park in Surrey, B.C., which lost power in September due to an improperly supervised motel demolition.

"I'm 100 times better. I feel better, I sleep better," says Chalmers, who suffers from multiple mental illnesses and lives on a meagre disability income.

New digs, old issues

After Metro ran stories on the outage, and the fact that he could n't find a new park willing to take his old, leaky trailer, an online campaign raised enough to buy him a newer, 1999 fifth-wheel.

But the complex problems of a man who has overcome crack addiction and alcoholism and still struggles daily with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder cannot be neatly resolved with four walls of aluminum and vinyl. Some days he feels up, some days he feels down, he says. The weather, getting used to his new neighbours, and the stress of living low-income — all of these have an effect on his moods.

But Chalmers says he seeks help when he needs it, from the mental-health care system, from friends, and from a local food bank.

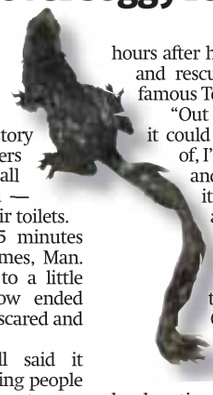
Moving on up

"I feel more positive about myself," Chalmers tells Metro. "I'm more sure of myself. I feel more personable towards myself... I think of myself as someone who actually deserves to be respected, which — that's kind of foreign territory to me."

Stephen Chalmers, who he says he is proud that by sharing his story publicly he has become someone people approach for advice about how to seek help.

Toilet Squirrel. 'Peg newsroom goes nuts over soggy rodent

BERNICE PONTANILLA
Metro reporter



It was the summer story that had Winnipeggers — and likely others all over North America — looking warily at their toilets.

And it led to 15 minutes of fame for a St. James, Man. woman, all thanks to a little critter that somehow ended up in her toilet wet, scared and clinging for dear life.

Angela Campbell said it was her love of making people laugh that spurred her to contact Metro Winnipeg only hours after her encounter with and rescue of the now infamous Toilet Squirrel.

"Out of all of the toilets it could have climbed out of, I'm glad it was mine and that I could help it," said Campbell in a December interview with Metro.

Once Metro Winnipeg broke the story online, Campbell was inundated with requests for interviews from local, national and international media outlets.

Metro's choice

Starman blows our minds

HENRIETTA WALMARK
Metro reporter

Commander's log — stardate: 04-12-2013: "Here am I floating in my tin can/A last glimpse of the world/Planet Earth is blue and there's nothing left to do."

Few events in 2013 eclipsed Chris Hadfield's cover of David Bowie's Space Oddity. The video of the astronaut literally floating in his "tin can" as he sang his farewell to life aboard the International Space Station capped an extraordinary mission of firsts.

As the ISS orbited Earth, he tweeted stunning photos of the planet, chatted with William Shatner, shared videos of zero-gravity science experiments, did Q&A's with kids via satellite-links and performed an interspace duet with Ed Robertson.

Hadfield was having the time of his life, and took us along for the ride.

But what's really cool is what's been left trailing in the stardust. Hadfield allowed me and millions of others to experience Earth and the universe as never before, sparking our imagination and reigniting interest in the final frontier as a space worth exploring.

Readers' online selections

Extra-terrestrials? Nose picking? What is this, you ask? Well, it's what you told us were your favourite Metro online national news stories of the year through our Metropolitan Panel

UFO sightings double in Canada

Ufology Research issued its Canadian UFO survey in May and the stats revealed reported sightings doubled in 2012. "Polls have shown that one in 10 Canadians believe they have seen a UFO. That's three to four million people with UFO experiences," said Chris Rutkowski of Ufology. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

T.O. man calls for stem-cell donations

In July, Chris Taylor of Toronto called on healthy 17- to 35-year-olds to become stem-cell donors. "I need one, it turns out, to save my life," he told Metro. "More importantly, it's for everyone who needs one." OneMatch is a program run by Canadian Blood Services which matches potential stem-cell donors to unrelated patients. Donors sign up for free and get a package in the mail containing a swab kit.
METRO

Nose pickers, rejoice

If you don't like gross things, this story is snot for you.
An associate professor of biochemistry at the University of Saskatchewan is trying to get more students interested in science by looking at the health benefits of picking your nose and eating it. Scott Napper says mucous traps germs and stops them from getting into our body, but if we consume that mucous, it could help train our immune system by exposing it to the germs.
THE CANADIAN PRESS/CKOM

New rules for Canuck drivers

In early 2012, this came in from the department of red tape you didn't know existed: Canadians were required by law to have an international driving permit in addition to their regular licences when driving in Florida. The new law applied to any non-resident, but has since been unanimously repealed by legislators.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Readers' + Metro's choice

Teen-trafficking case lacked outrage

JESSICA SMITH CROSS
Metro in Toronto

Three girls ran away from a group home last year, lured away by a prostitution ring and put to work in Toronto.

That story, more than any I've covered, left an impact.

The girls were in the care of the province, in a place that was supposed to be secure. But there was no public outrage. Critics for both opposition parties knew few details of the case and the Ministry of Child and Youth Services simply said after the trial that safety would be "enhanced."

Is that it? I wanted to see someone in power care and hear some promises about how it will never be allowed to happen again.

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Police dogs: Partners in (fighting) crime

Quanto, an Edmonton police dog killed on duty in 2013. CONTRIBUTED

LEAH GERMAIN
Metro reporter

Adam Segin is at a crossroads.

As a constable with the Edmonton police canine unit, Segin and his partner Storm have worked as a team for almost seven years — a year shy of retirement.

Unlike other jobs, retirement for a handler and police dog is a definite.

I first met Segin and his jet-black German shepherd while I was researching a followup article on Quanto, an Edmonton police dog killed on duty in 2013.

I was inspired by Quanto's story and the partnership between handler and service dog. It was a special bond — one that can only be formed with a creature that loves unconditionally.

For Segin, it's a bond he's been developing since Storm was seven weeks old. A bond he not only bets his job on, but his life. And as their bond grows stronger Storm grows older.

"That's the hardest part for me right now," Segin said. "He is eight years old and the last year has been kind of challenging.... (The job) is so much wear and tear on their joints, hips, knees and back."

Segin's boss, Staff Sgt. Troy Carriere said members of the canine unit have spent a good chunk of their careers training to be a handlers, which can make it especially hard for them to leave and retire their dogs.

"The really difficult part is when you drive away for the first time and go to your new job," Carriere said, remembering his own experience. "Your partner is really a part of you and you are leaving him or her at home."

Regina Humane Society

How writing a fluff piece got me a kitten

MARCO VIGLIOTTI
Metro reporter

The first time I stepped through the doors of the Regina Humane Society (RHS) last July, my heart instantly dropped as I heard the sheepish meows of the newborn kittens.

Unfortunately, the RHS was then swarming with around 85 furry felines (some housed at different spots in the city) and turning to the public for help.

In the journalism world, a story about the local animal shelter being overrun with cats would be termed a (literal) "fluff story."

But there's no question it had an undeniable impact on me.

After leaving that night, I pondered whether my girlfriend and I could handle a furry addition to our brood.

While both of us are adamant cat lovers, we're also close to 3,000 km away from our hometown of Ottawa, having moved to Saskatchewan only last summer.

We were complete newcomers, looking to adjust to an entirely new city. Was it fair to bring an animal into the mix?

Still, both of us thought, what could be the harm of taking a peek at some of the RHS cats that were being housed at Pat's Pets.

Then, we met Gus.

Draped in white fur and boasting a pair of huge pink ears, Gus was so feminine-looking that RHS staff originally thought he was a girl, to the point they gave him the name Harlow.

He instantly curled up in my girlfriend's arms as she picked him up. Then he batted at her dangling silver earrings.

As I picked him up, he stopped squirming and nestled into my chest.

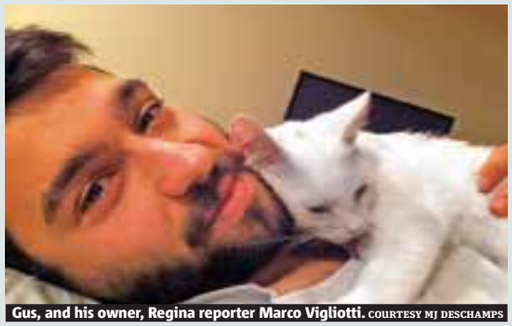
There was no doubt that he had just made our choice for us. We were his humans.

Only a few months with Gus, and already it's tough to imagine our lives without him.

He is one of the only cats I've ever seen incessantly meow to be picked up and held like a child.

As for us, we've been transformed into anxious messes on more than a handful of occasions, including routine visits to the vet.

Still, we wouldn't change a thing about him, nor will I ever forget my first (but definitely not last) visit to the RHS.



Gus, and his owner, Regina reporter Marco Vigliotti. COURTESY MJ DESCHAMPS

In Regina, sap left li'l squirrels in sticky sitch

The Animal Clinic of Regina got a surprise this past summer when a city worker brought in six squirrels fused together by their tails, which had been soaked with sap from the pine tree they were nesting in. They were sedated, and the veterinarian team worked to untangle the mess. Their tails were then shaved of the matted fur and they were given antibiotics to prevent infection, before being released back into the city's green-space. METRO IN REGINA/CONTRIBUTED

Metro picks:

Ebert's gift was connecting with people

EVA LAM
Metro copy editor

Roger Ebert

Following Roger Ebert's death on April 4, the L.A. Times published a tribute dubbing him "the first citizen critic." That, to me, summed up his greatest gift: his ability to connect with people.

In whatever role the multi-hyphenate took on — print movie reviewer, TV personality, film-fest founder, prolific blogger and tweeter — he presented criticism not as dissertation, but as conversation.

At the Movies introduced me to Ebert, as it did for countless others, but it was his writing that really drew me in. His reviews read less like measured analysis than a friend recounting his latest experience at the movies. I loved his no-nonsense directness, his heart and humour. He was as eloquent in describing his deep and evolving affection for La Dolce Vita over three decades as he was in parsing the bewildering logic of Transformers 2's battle scenes.

When cancer took away his ability to speak, he found a second act through social media and on his blog, where he ruminated on a range of subjects: movies, yes, but also gun control, religion, his childhood, mortality. Inversely, the dialogue between him and his audience was stronger than ever. As he did throughout his life, Ebert showed how mighty one voice can be when it recognizes the joy in being part of a chorus.

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Lululemon. Brand's response is sheer madness

MELISSA DUNNE
Metro copy editor

Bent over, hands touching toes, I swivelled to get a good look in the changing-room mirror. This is not the kind of bending and stretching I usually do in my $98 Lululemon pants.

The Luxtreme tights (not part of the recall last March) were almost as thin as pantyhose, my underwear clearly visible.

The clothing behemoth had cattily suggested the sheerness was caused by women squeezing their fat butts into too-small pants. So I went up a size, then another size. The bottoms were now loose and baggy ... and still see-through. I told a store "educator" about this, only to be snottily informed that, "It's the nature of the fabric."

It seems it's in the nature of the athletic-clothing empire to stretch its customers' patience. From the top on down, the response to the sheer-pants recall has been sheer madness.

Acting like a snobby yogi has been a core part of Lululemon's practice for too long. It's time for the new leadership to be the one twisting and bending for its devoted customer base. If not, this Lulu addict will have to find a new store.

An instructor, centre, conducts a yoga class while dressed in Lululemon clothes. JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Horsemeat

Do we really know what we're eating?

MIKE SPEERS
Metro associate managing editor, night production

Every once in a while, a news story pops up that makes you pause and reflect. Whether posing moral questions or highlighting an existential dilemma, these types of stories give our brains a much-needed shakeup.

No story better exemplifies this than the horsemeat scandal, where meat of the equus genus was passed off as high-quality beef. On the surface, this may seem like a rather unimportant story; after all, no one died or even got sick. In fact, horsemeat is quite safe and still eaten by many people today.

But what made it so important to me was that it forced us as consumers to stop and think about what we feed ourselves and our families. What exactly is in that ground beef? Is that pork from a pig that was fed antibiotics?

These are not questions I ask very frequently, but the horsemeat scandal made me realize that I should.

Bottle-cap story goes viral

LUCY HAINES/METRO IN EDMONTON

Offensive blunder

Vitamin Water commits big business gaffe

CANDICE WARD
Metro freelancer

While Blake Loates — who discovered the now-infamous "You Retard" bottle cap on the top of a bottle of Vitamin Water (a Coca-Cola product) back in September in Edmonton — has been satisfied with the outcome of the ordeal and moved on, the story still seems to be making headlines as one of the worst Canadian business blunders of 2013.

As a journalist, it was exciting to see a story I helped to uncover go viral and facilitate positive change within a major corporation, but it was also difficult to watch the toll the story was taking on the family.

Like Loates, I was unprepared for the story to go international so quickly, with major news outlets from around the world picking it up.

When stories like this one become viral, people tend to take to the web with their opinions — some supportive and others not so supportive.

Loates was never out for media attention (as I had approached her for the story), 15 minutes of fame or financial gain. She merely sought to bring awareness to the pain the word can cause — even if it was intended to be understood in its French context.

To me, she was a hero for standing up for something she believed was wrong and having the courage to stand by it, despite the criticism she was receiving.

Quick with apologies

$100K

Coca-Cola was quick to apologize for the marketing mistake, cancelled the promotion and even went above and beyond to donate $100,000 to charity.

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Rehtaeh taught me about respect

Rehteah's mother Leah Parsons. METRO FILE

HALEY RYAN
Metro reporter

More than eight months after Rehtaeh Parsons took her own life, I still think of a sentence her mother said to me just a couple days after her daughter's death.

I sat down with Leah Parsons in April, after she invited me into her Cole Harbour, N.S., home to hear about what kind of person Rehtaeh was, before and after the alleged rape that happened at a party when she was 15, in 2011.

"Rehtaeh's everywhere here," Parsons said with a sad smile as she looked around at the photos of her daughter lining the walls.

Interviewing someone who has suffered a major loss is intimidating because you want to do their loved one justice, but as I talked with Leah I realized listening and respect was all she needed.

I knew sharing Rehtaeh's story was the best way I could respect her memory and help her family. Parsons' said her daughter had been a headstrong, busy woman, passionate about animal rights.

Showing compassion

"Don't jump on the victim, help the victim."

Said Leah Parsons, Rehtaeh Parson's mother. Her daughter's story has become synonymous with bullying and has helped create legislation which criminalizes the distribution of intimate photos without consent.

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City's roads became rivers

ROBSON FLETCHER
Metro in Calgary

Standing at a downtown street corner, thigh-deep in brown water, I snapped one of my favourite photos of the Calgary flood. A man was trudging through the road-turned-river, with the flood-ravaged Saddledome in the background behind him. The image, to me, summed up just how far Calgary's rivers had encroached into the heart of the city. Then I realized I had better get the heck out of there.

Empathy

Bosma murder not just 'a story'

STEPHEN BALDWIN
Metro copy editor

The disappearance and murder of Tim Bosma was for me a reminder that we're all susceptible to becoming front-page stories. The 32-year-old Ancaster, Ont., man vanished after taking two men for a test drive in a truck he was selling.

The news that typically makes it to Metro's pages can often be devastating enough to elicit our sympathy, but rarely our empathy. As hard as we try, it's not easy to imagine ourselves in war-torn or hurricane-ravaged cities.

Anyone who has had to trust a stranger can relate to Bosma's situation. And the words of his wife, Sharlene Bosma, made the story even more real for me.

"Yesterday was the most horrifying day of my life and people tell me I have been so strong, and all I know is that I have a beautiful two-year-old girl at home who now needs her mommy more than ever and needs her mommy to hold it together, so I know that I cannot fall apart."

This was a heartbreaking loss for a young family, and my hope is that it forces people not to fear or distrust, but to view these stories not just as stories, but as personal experiences.

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International

From renewed unrest in Egypt to transgendered WikiLeakers to a tweeting Pope, 2013 showed us, once again, that the world is a fascinating place.

Egypt

'An uncertain reality'

DEENA DOUARA
Metro copy editor

Calls to relatives in Egypt are reminders that while the deteriorating state of affairs — of people's spirits and dreams and savings — is frustrating to behold from here, it's an uncertain reality, a nightmare, over there.

I was there this summer, in the leadup to the anniversary of then-president Mohamed Morsi's inauguration. I tried to understand the arguments: Egyptians must protest; Egyptians must stay home and give him a fair chance.

I tried to capture that atmosphere for Metro, on TV and for Huffington Post, all garnering strong reactions.

As protests intensified, so did people's rhetoric. A prevalent "You're with us or with the terrorists" approach took root, serving to justify military crackdowns and delegitimize nuanced opinions that didn't conform neatly to "pro-military" or "pro-Muslim Brotherhood."

The 2011 revolution was one of the most dramatic scenes Egyptians witnessed in at least three decades. There was uncertainty and disagreement and plenty of anger. But I believe it is 2013 that really changed Egyptians. Mistrust, contempt, revenge, hatred — these sentiments are relatively new, and they are frightening.

As repression, imprisonment and censorship have seemingly increased alongside an ever-declining economy, Egyptians now must too fear their neighbours. And divided, they say, is how they fall.

An Egyptian woman reacts in Tahrir Square the day after former Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi, the country's first democratically elected president, was ousted from power on July 4 in Cairo.
ED GILES/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Manning. The truth at what cost?

KEVIN HAMILTON
Metro copy editor

Chelsea Manning

Chelsea Manning is a name too quickly forgotten. This summer, the disgraced soldier was convicted of espionage for transferring classified U.S. military files to WikiLeaks. He received a 35-year sentence.

The biggest leak in U.S. history fuelled allegations of corrupt tactics, moral bankruptcy and outright war crimes. But the world instead fixated on WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and has now moved on to NSA leaker Edward Snowden. Manning was marginalized during her trial as her mental stability was called into question. And her announcement that she would live as a woman caused no end of distraction. All of this overshadowed what I think should be the true focus of the affair: ethics. Was Manning justified in breaking the law, potentially harming U.S. interests and possibly putting lives at risk in order to expose the truth? What acts are acceptable in the name of security? And how can a government remain accountable to its people while keeping its activities secret?

Keeping an eye on Syria

ALI ZAFAR
Metro copy editor

Nearly three years on, the Arab Spring has morphed into a disgruntled winter in Syria. While several Arab nations have toppled their dictators, Syria continues to be stuck between rebel strongholds and leader Bashar al-Assad.

Bearing the wrath of this power struggle are the citizens of the country. Around two million of them have been displaced, and Amnesty International estimates that more than 100,000 people have been killed since the conflict started in March 2011.

I've seen atrocities committed both in the name of religion and by iron-fist rulers while living in the Middle East and South Asia, which is why the plight of Syrians is something I can relate to. Being considered a religious minority in Pakistan, I can empathize with the woes of religious minorities in Syria who are worried about their country under the control of Islamist rebels. It's why I'll keep a close eye on stories coming out of Syria in 2014.

Steubenville

Victim blaming

JILLIAN BELL
Metro copy editor

For many rape victims, the rape itself is just the beginning of their nightmare. They are shamed and doubted. Their every action is questioned: What was she thinking wearing that skirt? Or drinking that much alcohol? This year, we saw the world rally around a rape victim in the Steubenville case. This was a refreshing, but an all-too-rare occurrence. If only every case of sexual assault generated such an uproar, perhaps more women would have the courage to report being raped, and more rapists would be held accountable.

Readers' online selections

Nothing hard-hitting here: Metro online readers gravitated towards a tiny-penis contest, the matrimonial woes of a Facebook couple, and a lion-like dog on the loose as their favourite international stories of 2013, as chosen through our Metropolitan Panel.

Interview with a smallest-penis contest winner

Meet Nick Gilronan: the winner of the Smallest Penis in Brooklyn. Gilronan entered the contest held in Kings County Bar in Brooklyn, N.Y., in August and came out on top despite the, uhh, stiff competition.
Anyway, you guys couldn't get enough of Metro's Q & A with this guy. METRO WORLD NEWS

Having same name apparently not the secret to a successful marriage

It took a simple Facebook message from one Kelly Hildebrandt to another Kelly Hildebrandt to get the wheels of love turning.
But it seems the two are no longer Facebook friends. The young couple filed for divorce in July. "How do they term it at the courthouse? Irreconcilable differences, that is what I would say," the male Hildebrandt told a newstation. "We gave it our best shot." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Dog shaved like lion prompts 911 call

A dog that has been shaved to look like a lion set off a panic in Norfolk, Va., in January. Three 911 calls came in on the same day reporting a lion wandering the streets. It's "roaming loose in the neighbourhood a few blocks from the zoo," one caller reported to the 911 dispatcher at 10:19 a.m. After the 911 calls, Norfolk police called the Virginia Zoo to make sure its lions were all accounted for. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MSN messenger goes the way of ICQ

Microsoft's venerable Messenger program was moved to the great big recycling bin in the sky this year.
Users had until March 15 to migrate their accounts over to Skype, which the software company acquired in 2011.
At its peak, Messenger boasted 300 million users in more than 60 countries.
Microsoft will continue Messenger in China, due to the peculiar nature of the Chinese Market. METRO

Search for Germany's giant golden cookie

Found missing at the beginning of this year: one golden cookie, weighing around 20 kg. The rectangular gilded bronze sculpture was part of a statue gracing the facade of German cookie baker Bahlsen's Hannover office. A police statement said a newspaper received a picture showing someone in an outfit similar to Sesame Street's Cookie Monster holding a golden cookie. The sender wrote to demand cookies be delivered to children at a city hospital. Police were not sure at the time if it was the same cookie, or a real claim of responsibility.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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#omg! Readers all a-Twitter over TEMP

Canadian author Douglas Coupland, best-known for his groundbreaking novel Generation X, visited Metro's head office just before the launch of TEMP. The 20-part fiction series was published in Metro throughout November. Here's how Metro readers responded on Twitter:

@jason_michael: A sincere heartfelt Thank You to @DouglasCoupland for TEMP. I am a temp working for the government and your words continue to inspire!

@Teyemtenot: yet another reason why Metro is my favourite thing to read in the morning!

@hurricanediana: thanks for keeping me entertained for 20 a.m. commutes. Funny, surprisingly thought-provoking and relevant.

@KaT4_2012: read TEMP every day! #youguysnailedit #precariousworkiseverywhere Douglas Coupland is brilliant

@morgancadenhead: The collaboration between @DouglasCoupland and @MetroNewsCanada is fascinating. A truly unique way to approach fiction.

@SuzanneMaryse: i am loving this! ... Coupland nails the post-modern condition once again

@ctmwyn: The best part about @DouglasCoupland #Temp is the high concentration of #CliffHangers #Serialization

METRO

Web editor Hannah Zitner chats with Douglas Coupland during the author's visit to Metro's head office in Toronto on Oct. 28. DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS

If you are giving this holiday season, consider a gift to the community through the Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre.

A variety of gift-giving options are available and all donations are tax deductible. If you are looking for the perfect holiday gift, you can make a donation in a loved one's name. The Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre will send a note to the recipient that explains your thoughtful gift and how you are helping to make a difference right here in our community and the life of someone in urgent need.

Each day, the Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre works to advance its mission of a food-secure community with innovative programs focusing on community building, not just community helping. In addition to emergency food and supplies, the centre offers literacy and employment programs, no-cost counselling, urban agriculture initiatives, and cooking and nutrition programs that help address the root causes of poverty and build a healthier community for all. The Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre receives no form of core funding and relies on the generosity of the community to operate.

Lee Knafelc, vice-president of human resources, left, and Laurie O'Connor, executive director of the Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre.

JACOB MORGAN PHOTO

This year, your donation will have an even greater impact thanks to the PotashCorp matching donations campaign. Every dollar donated to a food bank in Saskatchewan before Jan. 15, 2014, will be doubled by PotashCorp, up to a maximum of $1 million.

Donations can be made online at saskatoonfoodbank.org, by calling 306-664-6565, in person, or mailed to 202 Ave. C South.

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Voices This is rare. Three Metro columnists are asked to write about their most memorable work this year. Turns out it can't be done without your feedback.

MY ONE LONG YEAR

JUST SAYIN'

Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

Even though asking me to choose a favourite column is like asking me to proclaim a public preference for my goldfish over my hamster, I have dutifully reviewed Just Sayin' for the past year, and it turns out I have a lot to say, which might surprise a few people.

But I've managed to narrow it down.

Generally, I try to communicate my total bemusement with contemporary life. It's the best of times. It's the worst of times. It's the weirdest of times, right?

That makes for lots of material, such as:

CONTRIBUTED

Multi-billionaire Amazon's Jeff Bezos was in the news this year for buying the fabled Washington Post of Woodward and Bernstein fame for the equivalent of billionaire pocket lint: $250 million.

That's less, by the way, than what the Qatar Royal family paid for Impressionist painter Paul Cézanne's The Card Players — $259 million.

(Big deal. I paid $2.59 for The Card Players at the neighbourhood garage sale. I really love the look on the bulldog's face.)

Then there are those columns that are memorable for some really great bits, such as the one about the one-way expedition to Mars that was signing up potential colonists earlier this year:

"Therefore Mars One is looking for a special kind of person. Someone who is nuts enough to spend the rest of his or her life stuck in a climate-controlled hut the size of a portable toilet but well adjusted enough not to try to eat his or her fellow castaways."

ISTOCK IMAGES

What writing!

Of course, you can't write a column these days without having your own online anvil chorus, and I managed to hit a sour note writing about people who don't wear enough clothes on the beach. My protest went along aesthetic lines, not skin care, and the mob that formed outside my virtual door was not happy.

Here's just a taste: "Holy crap this is arguably the most ignorant thing I've ever read in my life."

You can't please all of the people all of the time, but if you try really hard, you can annoy all of the people all of the time.

Fortunately, I did manage to get an online standing O for a column I wrote about a movement to ban tipping that's just getting off the ground in New York and Chicago. One reader, named Crystal, gave me some unordinary positive feedback: "I don't usually write in to comment on articles of any sort, but after reading your brief article I had to say, very well written, entertaining, all the while thought-provoking. Excellent!"

Reader writes

"After reading your brief article I had to say, very well written, entertaining, all the while thought-provoking." Crystal

Thanks, Crystal, I needed that. As you can tell, it's been a long year.

2013 is over and I'm left holding the (mail)bag

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
readers@metronews.ca

ISTOCK IMAGES

I've been told to pick one favourite 2013 column and reminisce, but my columns are like my children and once they're out in the world I will deny they are mine.

Instead, let's open the mailbag. After a year of columnastic genius I feel it's important for readers to provide a fresh perspective on how wonderful I am. For instance, one fan recently sent me a Facebook message that said my columns are "desperately TRYING to be funny. Alas, they just come off juvenile." To hear my work is desperately funny, yet childlike, is wonderful. I clicked on her page to thank her and learned she's graduated from "I didn't finish (2008)," which signals a level of brash independence and attention to detail I think we can all emulate. Under professional skills it said, "crack-smoking," which means she will soon be a writer (if she's joking) or the mayor of a large city (if she's not).

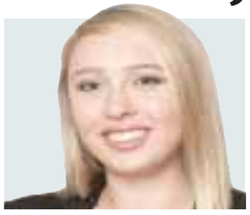
Mail moment

"Stupid yellow journalism at it's finest!!!" Online Fan

Another reader let me know my column is "pure dribble." I briefly assumed it was an insult and he had misspelled 'drivel.' Then I realized it was a basketball-related compliment, and that he considers me the Michael Jordan of Metro columnists. Pure, unadulterated dribble. Swish.

Some other actual mailbag highlights: * "Hypocrit much?" (More than you. I add an 'e.') * "Do your research." (No.) * "Stupid yellow journalism at it's finest!!!" (There are numerous problems here, but they are amply overcome by the use of three exclamation points. Bravo.) And that's the 2013 mailbag. See you next year, readers — older, but not wiser!!!

I swear, and I am a girl



SHE SAYS

Jessica Napier
@MetroSheSays

From the inbox

"I am saddened when I hear a young person, especially a young girl, making a public reference to parts of their body and their knowledge of sexual activity with obscenities."
Anonymous reader

As 2013 comes to a close, it's fun to look back at some of the memorable columns I've written over the course of the year. Back in June, I wrote a piece about swearing in public. I described how my boyfriend and I had been reprimanded by an overbearing parent at a neighbouring table after dropping a few expletives during a Sunday brunch.

I was hardly advocating for an uncivilized society full of foul-mouthed brutes, but the column definitely struck a nerve among our readers.

I received a few letters from people who identified swearing in public as a generational problem. One gentleman wrote an email stating, "I am saddened when I hear a young person, especially a young girl, making a public reference to parts of their body and their knowledge of sexual activity with obscenities."

I understand the importance of good manners, but I take offence to this notion that I should suppress any behaviour that is deemed 'unladylike' according to a 1950s standard.

ISTOCK IMAGES

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The film reel of 2013: The good, the bad and the ugly

Year in review. The beginning of a new year, like the opening of a new film, holds so much promise... It's time for Metro to screen 2013's crop

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

It's time to bid farewell to 2013 with a look at the most disappointing films of the year.

Pacific Rim
Giant robots! Fighting giant sea monsters! Directed by Guillermo del Toro! This could've been so good, and obviously we thought it would be, but the results were just… not so much.

Only God Forgives
Maybe Nicholas Winding Refn was punishing people for liking his fantastic "Drive" too much, but this art-house meditation on masculinity, violence and retribution — we think? — was just a slog.

Star Trek Into Darkness
We might have been less disappointed in this long-awaited sequel if J.J. Abrams had just come out and said from the get-go that Benedict Cumberbatch was playing Khan. If only that were the only problem with it, though.

Jack the Giant Killer
Maybe it was foolish to expect Bryan Singer to do something cool and interesting with the old Jack and the Beanstalk fairy tale, but this one just fell flat.

Oldboy
Spike Lee's plodding, uninspired remake of Park Chan-wook's 2003 cult classic at least makes a strong case for renting the original. Some things don't translate well, apparently.

Lovelace
A lot of foreplay that led to not very much of anything else, this exploration of the woman behind Deep Throat held too much back.

Director Guillermo del Toro really dropped the ball on Pacific Rim — a movie that promised so much and delivered so little. CONTRIBUTED

Metro's picks

1. Gravity
2. Blue Jasmine
3. 12 Years A Slave
4. Hunger Games
5. Dallas Buyers Club

The Fifth Estate
Maybe it was too soon to explore the rise and fall of WikiLeaks co-founder Julian Assange, but it seemed perfectly reasonable that Bill Condon and Benedict Cumberbatch were up to the task. Apparently not.

Anchorman 2
Following up an iconic comedy is tough, but we're still not sure what Adam McKay and Will Ferrell were thinking with most of the choices here. Lesson learned: A little bit of Steve Carell's Brick Tamland goes a long way. Also, the film's jokes about racism and sexism actually just play as racist and sexist. Maybe next time, guys?

We asked and you let us know that Gravity was your top movie pick for 2013. CONTRIBUTED

Reader's pick

What do you think? We recently polled Metro readers to see what film they considered to be the best of 2013. Gravity was the winner, hands down.

Enough Said
James Gandolfini's last leading film role, Julia Louis-Dreyfus' return to movies, another chance for Nicole Holofcener to examine adult relationships? This one had so much going for it. Too bad the end result is flat, uninspired and far too pleased with itself.

Metro pick

American Hustle

IN FOCUS
Richard Crouse
scene@metronews.ca

American Hustle's story of flim flam men and women, the FBI and a real life sting known as Abscam has emerged as my favourite movie of 2013. It's an entertainingly audacious movie that will doubtless be compared to The Wolf of Wall Street because of the similarity in tone and themes, but this time around director David O. Russell has almost out-Scorsese'd Martin Scorsese. Add to that unexpected and compelling performances from the a-list ensemble cast—Christian Bale, Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner, Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence — and it adds up to the most fun I had at the movies this year.

Metro pick

Dallas Buyers Club

Dallas Buyers Club was the movie of 2013 for me. But it wasn't the power of its plot or its commentary on HIV ignorance in the 1980s that moved my soul. No. It was witnessing the transformation of Matthew McConaughey into an Oscar-worthy actor. To the role of Ron Woodroof – an HIV-positive Texan rodeo rider searching for treatment – he wound up burning anger and desperation into a disturbingly emaciated frame. Watch. Then remind yourself this is the guy who brought us Dazed and Confused's Wooderson and the oft quoted line about high school girls: "I get older, they stay the same age." Lucky for us that Mr. McConaughey has matured into a fine thespian.

LIZ BROWN/METRO

HBO's Game belongs only on the Throne

The shocking Red Wedding episode of Game of Thrones made Metro's list of the best of 2013. HANDOUT

TV. Whether you binge watched or faithfully tuned in, there were a number of great shows this year. Metro weighs in on what was tube-worthy in 2013

Alexandra Cavallo, our TV correspondent from south of the border, gives us her picks for the best shows on TV, however you may watch TV.

Game of Thrones
Game of Thrones had the best season ever. What other show has the balls to ruthlessly — and awesomely, creatively and bloodily — kill off multiple main characters like it ain't no thing? Game of Thrones reigns supreme. See what I did there?

House of Cards
Other than HBO (and FX and A&E and — well, damn, seems like television is killing it lately, huh?) Netflix is putting out some of the most exciting and game-changing programs. House of Cards — to put it simply — is utterly captivating, and this comes from a person, who, I admit it, doesn't even vote. Politics is not my thing. But this show has it all: intrigue, sex, violence, scandal and Kevin Spacey. Enough said.

Project Runway
Here's my shout-out to reality TV. I love reality it. I watch it all. Housewives, teen moms, geriatric moms, people who have sex with inanimate objects — I'll watch them all, as long as it's "real." But Project Runway (technically a reality competition show, which makes it higher brow) is legitimately a quality show. The contestants (for the most part) are actually astoundingly talented, the challenges are fresh and exciting, and there's still enough cat fighting and drama to sate my appetite for lowbrow reality crap.

Girls
How did nobody else even mention this show? I don't care what anybody says, Lena Dunham is a genius and remarkably likeable despite airing her flaws — both emotional and physical — for the whole world to gawk at. Sure, the second season didn't quite meet the very high bar that the debut season set — it was a little too dark, and sometimes depressing — but as a 20-something girl myself (29 still counts) I can totally relate to almost everything that is said and done on this show. Don't judge me.

Nathan For You
Most people have probably never seen or even heard of this show. Get familiar, people, because Canadian comedian Nathan Fielder is one of the funniest dudes on the tube right now. This docu-reality comedy series basically features Fielder playing a deadpan, dead-eyed version of himself, using his "business background" to help out failing companies and individuals. Spoiler alert: He is not helpful. Trust me, you've got to watch it.

ALEXANDRA CAVALLO/MWN

Metro's picks

1. Breaking Bad comes to an end
2. Toronto Mayor Rob Ford is lampooned on every major late night talk show and Saturday Night Live
3. The murder-filled Red Wedding episode of Game of Thrones shocks viewers not familiar with the book series.
4. Arrested Development returns to TV via Netflix
5. Netflix series House of Cards becomes the first web TV show to receive major Primetime Emmy Award nominations, and goes on to win in three categories.

Finally, a healthy binge

You could say I'm always a little late to the party. Up until six months ago, I didn't have Netflix, I never watched TV online and I never thought I was missing out. That was until I was introduced to Breaking Bad. I now fully indulge in what is being called binge-tv watching. I have devoured entire series (Family Guy, The Boondocks, American Dad, Episodes, The Walking Dead, to name a few. Yes, a few), and have spent an unacceptable amount of time on my couch. And though I'm nostalgic for the days of looking forward to my favourite show every week, and being left hanging for an entire summer before mv shows return. I embrace this new way of enjoying television even if I'm a little late. MIRIAM OSBORNE/METRO

Final eight episodes

Breaking Bad: The final curtain

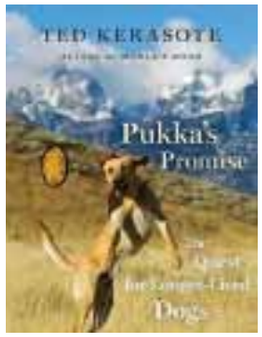
In mid 2013 the final eight episodes of the ultra-popular and critically acclaimed series Breaking Bad went on air. As usual Bryan Cranston and Aaron Paul turned in stellar performances and creator Vince Gilligan ensured the climactic episodes did not disappoint. We join the second half of the final season with Hank finally realizing that Walt is the infamous meth kingpin Heisenberg.

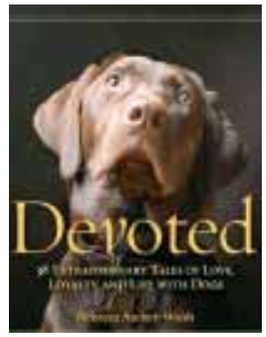
This riveting show draws to a close with eight suspense-filled episodes. We see Jesse team up with Hank to catch Walt, Todd's ruthless relatives committing horrible deeds and Walter, in conflict with his family and on the run, tying up as many loose ends as he can. Viewers were rewarded for their loyalty with a brilliantly crafted and gradual ending to this Ned Flanders-turned-Scarface story. As the screen faded to the sound of Baby Blue I realized we may never see the likes of it again. Pure Genius. EOIN WELDON/METRO

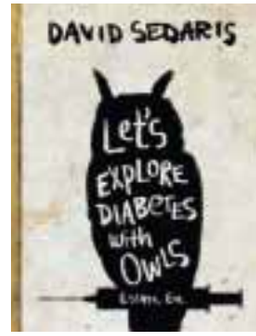
What writers were reading this year

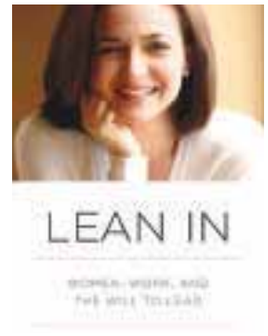
Publishing. Authors Teresa Rhyne and Emily Giffin share their top book picks of 2013

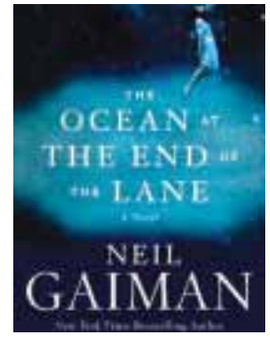
EMILY LAURENCE
Metro World News

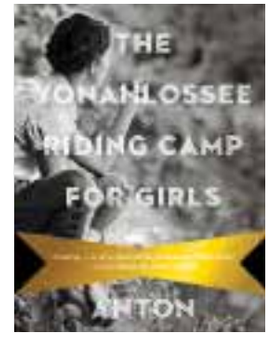












It's hard for a first-time author to surpass the bold-faced names typically seen on the New York Times best-seller lists, but that's exactly what Teresa Rhyne did with her book The Dog Lived (And So Will I). Her memoir about adopting a dog with cancer inspired millions. So, what books impacted Rhyne in 2013? She shares her top non-fiction picks below.

1. Pukka's Promise: The Quest For Longer-Lived Dogs, by Ted Kerasote
I'm a lifetime dog-lover and yet this book made me rethink how I live with my dogs and what more I can do for their health and welfare, and that was no easy task. Plus, Ted can spin a great tale (tail?) and that's not easy, either.

2. The Imperfect Environmentalist, by Sara Gilbert
This is a practical guide to clearing your body, detoxing your home and saving the Earth — without losing your mind — by actress Sara Gilbert. I've had two dogs fight cancer and I'm a cancer survivor myself, so this year I was all about detoxing our environment. This book became my go-to reference, particularly because of her Cut to the Chase Hippie: What's the Least I Need to Know advice section on every topic — perfect.

3. Devoted: 38 Extraordinary Tales of Love, Loyalty, and Life With Dogs, by Rebecca Ascher-Walsh
I'm a sucker for a beautiful dog book, and this one comes with touching stories about the many ways dogs are better than we are.

4. Let's Explore Diabetes With Owls, by David Sedaris
Because David Sedaris. Enough said.

5. Lean In, by Sheryl Sandberg
Lean In is thought-provoking, fascinating and depressing. (What have I done with my life?!) It's about as highbrow as I went in 2013.

International best-selling author Emily Giffin knows a thing or two about what makes a good page-turner. Her first book, Something Borrowed, was made into a movie starring Kate Hudson and Ginnifer Goodwin, and her subsequent five novels have been lauded both here and abroad. Giffin, whose seventh novel, The One and Only, comes out in May 2014, shares her favourite fiction books of the year with us.

1. The Silent Wife, by A.S.A. Harrison
This is a gripping, intelligent thriller about a marriage on the verge of collapse and a woman at her breaking point. It's gorgeously written and impossible to put down. A sad footnote: The author passed away just before the book's publication.

2. Sisterland, by Curtis Sittenfeld
Sisterland is a moving and complex emotional study of twin sisters born with mild ESP. Curtis Sittenfeld is one of my favorite authors. As a mother of identical twins, I found this story especially fascinating.

3. The Ocean At The End Of The Lane, by Neil Gaiman
This story is a beautiful but bewitching fairy tale of magic and memory. The novel is very unlike my usual reads, but my sister convinced me to give it a chance. She was right — it's hauntingly delicious.

4. The Yonahlossee Riding Camp For Girls by Anton DiSclafani
I have always been drawn to coming-of-age stories, and this novel is a true gem among them. Set during the Depression at an equestrian boarding school, DiSclafani's debut is that rare combination of understated elegance and explosive drama.

5. Wonder by R.J. Palacio
Wonder is about a 10-year-old boy who was born with extreme facial anomalies. I read it aloud to my three children, and it touched us all profoundly. It's not only my favorite book of the year, but also of all time — right up there with To Kill A Mockingbird.

Metro's turn-up and tune-out in 2013

GETTY IMAGES

Metro's picks

Metro's picks for top five songs

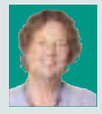
- **1.** Get Lucky, by Daft Punk
- **2.** Reflektor and Afterlife, by Arcade Fire
- **3.** Black Skinhead, by Kanye West
- **4.** Royals, by Lorde
- **5.** Thrift Shop, by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis

No lines blurred in this selection

As a shameless Jay Z super fan, I want to say 2013's top song was Holy Grail featuring Justin Timberlake. But even I can't deny this year belonged to Blurred Lines by Robin Thicke featuring Pharrell Williams and T.I. A simplistic hook and its blend of R&B and pop helped the infectious Blurred Lines hold top spot on charts around the world. It also created its share of controversy (think music video with prancing topless supermodels and Thicke preemptively suing Marvin Gaye's family). Love it or hate it, at some point (maybe in a drunken stupor if you're a certain mayor) you likely caught yourself singing, "OK, now he was close, tried to domesticate ya..." IZABELA SZYDLO, METRO

Metro picks

Song of the Year: Royals by Lorde



SOUND CHECK
Alan Cross
scene@metronews.ca

Talk about a song with universal appeal! What began as a track marketed to the alternative set has become the biggest cross-format hit in years.

This is largely due to what was left out of Royals. It would have been so easy (and tempting!) to mess up the song by over-producing it. Instead, there's an elegant simplicity to everything: an understated rhythm track and the barest hint of a bass line. Lorde's vocals do the rest. The song doesn't even contain a bridge. This is brilliant songwriting, an excellent performance and perfect production, all wrapped in one great song.

Crossover appeal lands Lorde at the top of Alan Cross's list. HANDOUT

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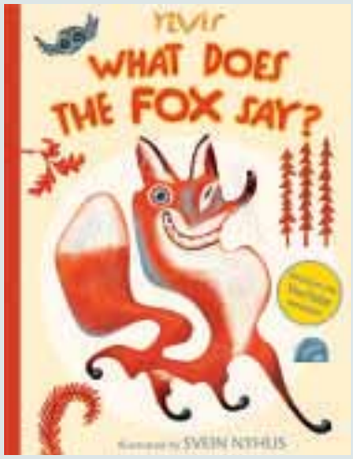
The 2013 cyber heights of cyberspace

Metro's picks

1 Chris Hadfield's out-of-this-world version of Space Oddity inspired many. Kris Abel walks you through his blast off into the collective consciousness.

2 Norwegian comedy group Ylves' video for What Does the Fox Say? was YouTube's top video of the year, and has even spawned an illustrated book.



3 Amanda Bynes' 2013 tweets left many of us scratching out heads — and just shocked.

4 Felix Baumgartner's freefall from the edge of space.

5 Patrick Stewart's tweets left an impression on anyone within a half mile of Twitter this year. Read what we have to say about them on this page.

A Canadian star was born

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
scene@metronews.ca

Chris Hadfield won the Internet this year with a viral hit that was anything but accidental. He evoked the beauty of our world by sharing how difficult it was to leave its orbital view. These are complex emotions that he somehow captured with an iPad recording of himself singing David Bowie's Space Oddity. His Space Station video lessons and tweeted photos revealed a master communicator who understands the web better than anyone. Through him we have an extraordinary connection to space exploration, but also an example of how a cynical web culture can embrace values that are sophisticated and sincere.

Another kind of fame

Getting high off Patrick's personality

Making memes from Patrick Stewart's many starring movie roles is nothing new for those who lurk the intertubes. But when his fiancé posted a video of an allegedly stoned Stewart giving her acting lessons on the art of the quadruple take, the Internet's collective head caught a contact high. The powerful hit lasted throughout the year as Reddit and its kind obsessed over all things Stewart. From the serious (Stewart speaking about his own experiences with domestic violence) to the silly (him climbing into a bathtub dressed as a lobster), the former captain of the Star Trek Enterprise was sailing nothing but the good ship Awesome in 2013. METRO

Patrick Stewart, here with Ian McKellen, showed us a side of him we'd never seen before.
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Top headlines of Hollywood's 2013

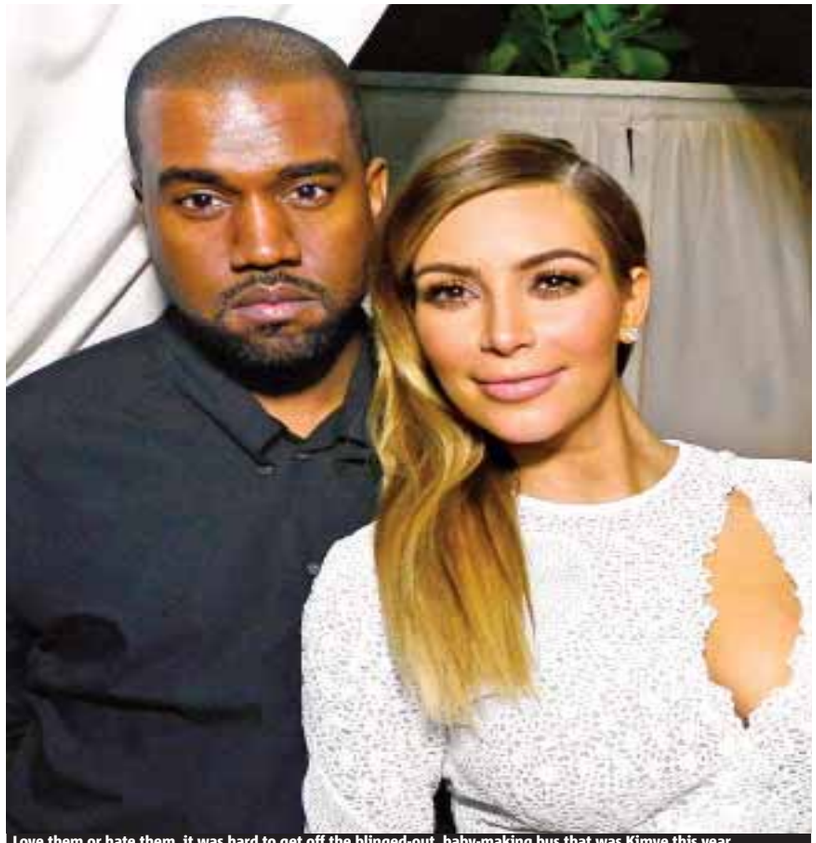
They did what? It was a shock-and-awe year in celeb gossip, and Metro's editors never hesitated to chime in on the tabloid chatter

Pop culture gets a bad rap, according to Metro's gossip editor, Dorothy Robinson. Sure, it's lowbrow (especially when Miley Cyrus decides to take her clothes off with no deference to taste or talent) and it births fame-hungry monsters (Kimye, you are a creation even Walter Winchell couldn't dream up). Yet, the hijinks and disasters of people who fly so very high take us away from the humdrum of everyday life.

Keeping up with Miley is a nice distraction from the fact that the cable bill is due. Watching Beyonce at the Super Bowl is a reminder of what is humanly possible if you have drive, talent and a whole lot of luck. And witnessing the untimely deaths of two stars reminds us that even our little lives are ones worth living. In fact, maybe we're the lucky ones, blessed to be outside looking in — instead of the other way around.

Here is what some of our editors had to say about the year in gossip:

"I didn't put the Royal Baby on my list because I thought that fell under news. Come on: Kate Middleton should NEVER be on the same list as Miley or Kim Kardashian. And although Avril Lavigne marrying Chad Kroeger wasn't earth-shaking, it was so delightfully weird that I thought it deserved a mention." **DOROTHY ROBINSON**



Love them or hate them, it was hard to get off the blinged-out, baby-making bus that was Kimye this year. GETTY IMAGES

"I, for one, definitely had Beyonce winning the Super Bowl on my list. Nothing can stop her, not even a blackout. I don't even remember who actually played. All I remember is the Destiny's Child reunion and Beyonce's black lace body suit. She wins." **EMILY LAURENCE**

"I can't find any evidence supporting the theory that Kanye has a sense of humor; I fear he is gravely serious. We mere mortals just do not understand him." **T. MICHELLE MURPHY**

I guess unlike other calculated 'Look at me! I'm no longer a Disney pop princess! I'm now a woman!' coming-out moments (see: Britney in the red pleather body suit; Christina's suggestive Genie in a Bottle), Miley's coming out seems raw and unpolished. She's going more for shock value than sex appeal. Which, honestly, is slightly refreshing. Just put the tongue away, girlfriend." **DOROTHY ROBINSON**

Metro's picks

1. Miley Cyrus ditches her clean-cut image by twerking at the MTV awards, smoking a joint on air at the MTV Europe Awards, and working with photographer Terry Richards — and those are just some of her antics.
2. Amanda Bynes — see Liz Beddall's story to your right.
3. Kanye West and Kim Kardashian brought forth a baby and decided it would be fun to name her North.
4. Justin Beiber wreaked havoc in his neighbourhood with his driving, peed in a bucket, lost his monkey, and then had a drama-filled South American tour before heading to Australia for more of the same.
5. Angelina Jolie surprised the world by announcing she underwent a double mastectomy.

Cory Monteith's untimely death shocked the world. GETTY IMAGES

Dorothy Robinson's picks

1. Miley Cyrus' crazy year.
2. The evolution of Kimye (and the birth of baby North West).
3. Beyonce wins the Super Bowl.
4. Cory Monteith overdosing.
5. Avril Lavigne marrying Chad Kroeger.

Amanda on our minds

Reading between the Bynes

While it seems 2013 was the year of the squeaky-clean-songtress-turned-train-wreck-tabloid-queen, there was arguably no one who was featured as consistently on Metro's Dish page as former WB sweetheart Amanda Bynes.

Multiple brushes with the law, airborn bongs, driveway fires, neon wigs and one trainwreck of a Twitter feed meant that Bynes all too often became our feature focus.

Having recently received treatment for mental illness, we hope 2014 brings Amanda some peace, health and much-needed time away from the tabloids. **LIZ BEDDALL/METRO**

Amanda Bynes GETTY IMAGES

Who wasn't confused by this Canadian coupling? GETTY IMAGES

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The five worst fitness trends of 2013 we hope don't return

Year-end review. Workouts can get boring from time to time but these ideas on how to switch things up missed the mark this year.

VAWN HIMMELSBACH
life@metronews.ca

There is nothing wrong with weightlifting. But weightlifting in the heat doesn't make sense. ALL IMAGES ISTOCK PHOTOS

It's not a bad idea to switch up your workout routine every now and then to challenge your muscles and stay motivated. But in the quest for new ways to do old exercises, some trends might be a tad questionable.

Backwards is just backwards.

Backwards running

Sure, running can get monotonous, but is running backwards the answer? There's a reason why people are doing it: According to a study by the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health, running backwards uses 30 per cent more energy than moving forward at the same speed. And, supposedly, it's easier on your knees. But let's face it; running backwards is an accident waiting to happen since — if it's not obvious — you can't see where you're going. Not to mention it looks ridiculous.

Boutique/hybrid yoga

If you're into yoga, there are a variety of styles to suit your personality, from ashtanga to moksha to yin. But now, you can mix those warrior poses with … hula-hoops, trampolines and martial-arts kicks. Or do yoga on a paddleboard, to disco music or even with your dog (doga). But yoga isn't about total body sculpting or getting a cardio workout — it's about quieting your mind. And it's hard to quiet your mind while doing disco moves in tree posture.

Extreme HIIT … for average Joes

High-intensity interval training (or HIIT) has many benefits: Bursts of vigorous exercise (think squats and burpees) followed by brief rest periods can burn calories — fast. That's why we've seen the rise of workouts like CrossFit, and the Insanity and P90X DVD series. But along with the increase in popularity of these types of workouts has come an increase in injury, from slipped disks to torn rotator cuffs. According to a recent study published by The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research, 16 per cent of CrossFit participants quit the program due to overuse or injury. At least it's good news for orthopedic surgeons.

Run from this trend.

Themed runs (that involve barbed wire)

Working out should be fun, and hey, who wouldn't be motivated to run faster when being chased by zombies? While themed workouts from Tough Mudder to colour runs (running through clouds of coloured cornstarch) can be motivating or push you to challenge your endurance, any athletic endeavor that involves wading through ice water under barbed wire or being zapped by live wires is questionable. Perhaps next we'll start seeing live wires attached to treadmills so you'll get zapped if you're not running fast enough.

Hot weightlifting

Traditional weightlifting remains one of the best ways to build muscle. But one of the latest fads takes weightlifting to a new level — pumping iron in the heat. The concept behind Bikram yoga (where the temperature in the room is cranked to 40.6 C with a humidity of 40 per cent) is now being applied to everything from barre to spinning and weightlifting classes. But according to a recent study by the American Council on Exercise, turning up the heat doesn't actually burn extra calories. You just think you are, all the while risking dehydration and even heat stroke. If you like the heat, best to stick to Bikram.

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This is a collaborative effort to meet the needs of our community. The City of Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Academy of Veterinary Practitioners and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine have joined forces to deliver this initiative, with the assistance of New Hope Dog Rescue, SCAT Street Cat Rescue and the Saskatoon SPCA.
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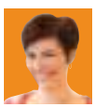
I'll take a cold cerveza with that

Mexican has gone beyond the smothered-in-cheese dishes. ISTOCK

Year of Mexican food. You've been fooled long enough with cheesy dishes and store-bought salsa. Authentic Mexican is taking over — olé!



NUTRI-BITES
Theresa Albert
DHN, RNCP
myfriendinfood.com

Remember when Mexican food meant cookie cutter platters of oddly coloured white rice with a bunch of stuff covered in cheese?

You may have gotten a bowl of pre-fab corn chips and bottled salsa instead of bread as an appetizer.

Luckily, 2013 saw the rise of true Mexican food. It showed up everywhere, from the very hip food truck culture running away with the foodie heart to the top end of just about every urban menu.

Some of the foods that we can't get enough include pulled pork, fish tacos and burritos. And you really haven't lived unless you've found churros with the caramel-like dulce de leche sauce. (Don't forget the side of tequila, which was the beverage of 2013.)

Real Mexican food is wholesome, and it varies across the country from fish-based seaside to tropical fruit interiors, but they all have three things in common: corn, chili peppers and beans. The Europeans added pork, chicken and tomatoes and North Americans topped it all off with some flair.

Taco night is no longer spice from a box mixed with ground beef and corn shells, although, they are certainly retro-welcome. Think broader.

Chicken

Toss a chicken in the slow cooker with one of the many creative jars of salsa on the market and cook all day. Pull chicken from the bones and serve with tostadas, artisan corn and wheat tortillas plus toppings like frozen corn simply roasted on a cookie sheet in the oven.

Cole Slaw

Think about a grated cole slaw mix instead of shredded lettuce. Top with cocoa nibs, any manner of chopped chilies and any combo of fresh herbs. Serve with fresh lime juice and soda water with muddled mint (go ahead add some tequila!)

Pulled Pork

Pulled pork couldn't be easier. The low and slow oven versions create the best melt in your mouth recipes. Sauce options run the gamut from barbecue sauce to the chocolate and chili based mole sauce. This one pot wonder is the best crowd pleaser to come out of this Mexican trend. Pork shoulder or arm is an affordable (if fatty) cut that can't be ruined as long as you keep the oven temperature below 300 and the time at least an hour per pound.

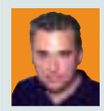
Churro Dip

Since churros are hard to find, must be fresh and deep frying is a pain (not to mention crazy unhealthy!)

Why not go with the classic churro dip: dulce de leche and forgo the donut? This sweet milk caramel sauce can be now purchased jarred but the quickie cheater recipe using only sweetened, condensed milk is ridiculously easy. Use it to drizzle onto vanilla pudding, fresh fruit or chocolate cookies and you are right on the Mexican trend. Which will, by the way, continue for a few more years... **THERESA ALBERT IS A FOOD COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST AND TORONTO PERSONAL NUTRITIONIST. SHE IS @THERESAALBERT ON TWITTER AND FOUND DAILY AT WWW.MYFRIENDINFOOD.COM**

Wine of the Year

2011 Vintage Port



LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

"I'm loading up on 2011 Vintage Port," says Peter Rockwell, Metro's expert for all things liquid. "Considered one of the best years in decades; all the big houses released a version this year. Dow's 2011 ($79.49) is spectacular; and will age well into 2063."

Design darlings of 2013

Style gurus Steven Sabados and Chris Hyndman take a look back at the top home-decor trends of the past year, and find the standout themes included artful lighting, lived-in linen, warm gold and brass accents, and the rustic look of unfinished wood. For more chic decor ideas, watch Steven & Chris weekdays at 2 p.m. on CBC.

Emerald Green

Emerald green, Pantone's 2013 colour of the year, was eagerly and enthusiastically embraced by designers and consumers. From throw cushions to sofas and wall treatments, emerald green was undoubtedly this year's "it" colour. Emerald green is vibrant, radiant and lush and it's not surprising that its popularity also sparked a renewed interest in all things glam.

Gold and brass

This was the year many vintage favourites experienced a major comeback. Gold and brass, reminiscent of decades past, became a leading trend and surfaced anywhere from hardware finishes to decor accessories.

Gold flatware appeared on tabletops. Chrome no longer dominated kitchen and bathroom fixtures as gold and brass taps offered a warm metallic glow in the room. Brass and gold decor accents became increasingly sought after this year as the idea of mixing metallics grew in popularity.

You don't need to discard your existing finishes to incorporate brass and gold into your home decor, and that's a key factor in the success of this design trend.

Left, hand-shaped brass Loki Bowl, $94, crateandbarrel.com; and below, Brass Leaf Side Table, $189 US, urbanoutfitters.com.

Natural wood was the material of choice for many this year, say Steven and Chris. Crate and Barrel's Big Sur Natural collection, which includes dining tables, benches and a sideboard, has a polished wax finish and emphasizes the innate character of the wood. For more details, see crateandbarrel.com. COURTESY CRATEANDBARREL.COM

Natural wood

Natural wood was the material of choice for many this year. Raw wood tables with no varnish or treatments went from being showroom darlings to standard household decor.

The versatility and durability of raw wood coupled with its natural patina over time make it a sensible and stylish solution for family living. The rustic look of natural unfinished wood has also been juxtaposed with cooler elements like chrome and glass in more formal areas of the home.

Lighting as art

Lighting as a form of artwork became a popular concept this year. Form reigned over function for most of this year's most desired light fixtures. In 2013, lighting made a statement in the room instead of just lighting it up. Over-scale light fixtures were also a big part of this trend. Chandeliers, pendants, sconces, table lamps and floor lamps have become key extensions of a room's style and personality.

The lived-in look

In 2013, comfort was king with a big focus on natural fibres such as linen. The relaxed lived-in look was seen in many upholstered decor pieces such as casual wingback chairs and slipcovered sofas. Even drapery has moved away from traditional silk textiles to the more casual elegance of linen. The driving force of this trend is lifestyle and the move away from traditional formal choices to more liveable no-fuss options.

Lived-in comfort: Crate and Barrel's Jeremiah Jute Back Rocker features Belgian linen. See crateandbarrel.com for details.

Emerald, which was Pantone's 2013 colour of the year, showed up in a wide range of decor products including this Mohair Fringe Throw, $199, from zarahome.com.

Distribution Assistant (part time)

Who We Are: Metro is Canada's most-read national daily newspaper brand. Metro targets YAMs (youthful, active metropolitans) and reaches more than 1.6 million readers daily and 3.9 million over the course of a week. Metro launched in Canada in Toronto in 2000 and in the spring of 2012, we launched in 6 new cities. In short – we're still growing!

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- Provide solutions and options for managing all our newspaper pick up points
- Processing collected field data

REQUIREMENTS OF THE POSITION:

- Customer service is a must
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- Familiar with the City of Saskatoon
- Presentable, confident and articulate
- Able to work flexible hours
- Valid Class 5 driver license and reliable vehicle is a must

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PLEASE QUOTE: "Distribution Assistant (Part Time) - Saskatoon in the subject line.
All submissions will be treated as confidential.

metro

Sports It was a highly successful year for the Saskatchewan sports scene. Here are the stories that made us cheer and smile with pride.

Roughriders display class on and off the field

ROSS ROMANIUK
ross.romaniuk@metronews.ca

It was a remarkable season for the Saskatchewan Roughriders, particularly through the eyes of a journalist who had recently entered the land of Rider Nation feeling a little green.

It wasn't that I moved to Regina last winter without any idea of the general success of the Roughriders on the field, and on their financial balance sheets.

As a staunch Blue Bombers fan in Winnipeg for the past few decades, I had been aware of what the Green and White means to Saskatchewan, and how ingrained the team is in this province's identity.

But upon arriving in the Queen City, the enormity of the local CFL franchise's success, and the way it's appreciated in its home community, was eye-opening.

Following so many years of my football frustration in Winnipeg, with a team whose most recent Grey Cup title came before the dawn of the Internet, I was accustomed to Manitoba pigskin fans dumping on the home side at every opportunity. And for all kinds of reasons.

The Bombers have long given their supporters plenty of ammunition to do so. As if their championship drought since 1990 weren't enough, the franchise took on the image of a circus a few years ago amid an endless string of coaching, front-office and public-relations blunders.

It's been nothing short of a Blue and Gold gong show as, for instance, then-coach Mike Kelly, in 2009, derided fans who questioned his on-field decisions on a weekly radio call-in show. It continued as Bombers brass held a news conference to address beer-cup "snakes" in the stands, and as the painfully slow construction of the team's new Investors Group Field turned into a joke instead of a source of franchise and community pride.

In Saskatchewan, it couldn't be more different — even with mid-season assault charges against three Riders players. The alleged nightclub incident in Regina that led to the charges has so far brought a ripple of negative attention, washed away by the season-long love-in among the team's faithful — and by its historic championship victory on home Mosaic Stadium turf.

The Roughriders' Grey Cup championship wasn't just a triumph for the team but also for Rider Nation.
JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

This past year, I've waited for a sideshow-style calamity — the kind I have seen so many times with the Bombers — to strike the Roughriders, along with fan finger-pointing and missteps by management.

I'm still waiting.

What I see, instead, are well-organized team promotions and programs completely bought in to by the adoring fan base. I see a professional football club run how it should be, in a professional manner.

And in the mirror, I see a Bombers supporter impressed by Saskatchewan's football culture, and turning at least a little of his blue hue into a faint shade of green.

Saskatchewan's top five sports stories of 2013

MARCO VIGLIOTTI/METRO
Photos by The Canadian Press, Getty Images and Red Bull

5 Riders capture glory at home

In front of nearly 50,000 adoring fans at Mosaic Stadium, the Roughriders defeated the Tiger-Cats 45-23 on Nov. 24 to claim the 101st Grey Cup.

The championship was the fourth in franchise history and the first won on home turf.

4 Saskatoon hosts Memorial Cup

Saskatoon welcomed the best in major junior hockey last May, when the province's biggest city played host to the 2013 Memorial Cup championship.

While the host Blades were eliminated early, the team did manage to beat the eventual champion Halifax Moose-heads in the round robin.

3 DeLaet makes his presence felt

Saskatchewan golf star Graham DeLaet stepped out into the international spotlight in 2013.

The Weyburn native participated in his first major tournament as a PGA professional when he travelled to Scotland last July for the 2013 British Open.

2 McDouble: Bros take on TV, hills

Saskatchewan's own snowboarding siblings Mark and Craig McMorris starred in an eight episode docu-series on MTV Canada in 2013 that presented a behind-the-scenes look at the Regina duo as they travelled and competed around the world.

Mark opened the season with a gold at the Dew Tour on Sunday Dec. 15.

1 Albers bursts on big-league scene

North Battleford product Andrew Albers made his Major League Baseball debut as a pitcher with the Minnesota Twins last summer.

He started his big-league career by not allowing a single run in his first 17 innings.

4 SPORTS

The past year has produced several highs and many lows for Canadian teams and athletes. The following storylines grabbed our attention above all the others.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

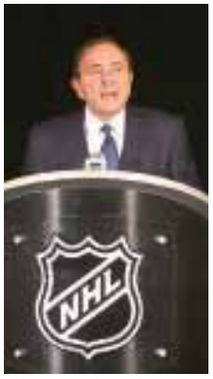
1 The end of the NHL lockout

Hockey fans rejoiced when the NHL and the NHL Players' Association reached a tentative deal to end the lockout in the early hours of Jan. 6.

The agreement was ratified by the board of governors three days later.

Just over five months later, the Chicago Blackhawks won their second Stanley Cup in four years.

Then in November, the league signed a massive new television deal with Rogers Communications worth $5.2 billion over 12 years.



NHL commissioner Gary Bettman apologized for the tardy start of the season. GETTY IMAGES

2 A season of disappointment

The Toronto Blue Jays came into 2013 as World Series favourites after a blockbuster off-season that included a 12-player megadeal with the Florida Marlins and the acquisition of reigning National League Cy Young winner R.A. Dickey.

But, though the city initially buzzed at the thought of meaningful September baseball for the first time since the team's championship years in 1992 and 1993, the campaign was a bust.

Brett Lawrie TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

3 Raonic's rise

Tennis star Milos Raonic became the first Canadian to crack the ATP top-10 list.

The Thornhill, Ont., player made the Rogers Cup final in Montreal and was also instrumental in leading Canada to the Davis Cup semifinals.

Also making big gains on the court in 2013 were Vancouver's Vasek Pospisil and Montreal's Eugenie Bouchard, who both shot up the rankings.

Milos Raonic GETTY IMAGES

4 CFL double for Cornish

Calgary Stampeders running back Jon Cornish became the first Canadian in 35 years to win the CFL's most outstanding player award.

Cornish, who was also named the league's top Canadian for the second straight year, is the first Canuck to be named CFL MVP since Ottawa Rough Riders tight end Tony Gabriel in 1978.

Cornish finished the 2013 season with 1,813 yards rushing and 12 touchdowns.

Jon Cornish went on to win the 2013 Lou Marsh award as Canada's top athlete. THE CANADIAN PRESS

The top 8 sports stories of the year

5 Green crush

The Saskatchewan Roughriders became the third straight Grey Cup host to win the trophy, defeating the Hamilton Tiger-Cats 45-23 on Nov. 24.

The Roughriders won the Grey Cup in Rider Nation. GETTY IMAGES

The Riders won the 101st edition of the CFL championship in front of their rabid fans at Mosaic Stadium in Regina, with Kory Sheets rushing for a Grey Cup-record 197 yards and two touchdowns to help his team to just its fourth title.

"The one thing that led us to a dominant performance was that the fans were unreal," said Riders coach Corey Chamblin. "The whole (stadium) was green."

Anthony Bennett is greeted by NBA commissioner David Stern upon being drafted. GETTY IMAGES

6 Canadian hoops history

Anthony Bennett shocked many observers on June 27 when he became the first-ever Canadian to go No. 1 at the NBA draft, selected by the Cleveland Cavaliers.

"I'm just as surprised as everybody else," the Brampton, Ont., native said

Meanwhile, Vaughan, Ont.'s Andrew Wiggins was named the top high school player in the U.S.

7 A trio of hockey stunners

- The Toronto Maple Leafs made the playoffs for the first time since 2004 and looked set to advance to the second round when the wheels fell off in spectacular fashion. Toronto led Boston 4-1 with just over 11 minutes to go in the third period of Game 7. The Bruins won 5-4 in OT.
- Ottawa's beloved captain Daniel Alfredsson bolted from the Senators after 17 seasons to sign with the Detroit Red Wings.
- The Vancouver Canucks' goalie soap opera took an unexpected turn at the NHL draft when GM Mike Gillis traded Cory Schneider — not Roberto Luongo — to the New Jersey Devils.

Daniel Alfredsson GETTY IMAGES

8 GSP steps away

UFC welterweight champion Georges St-Pierre successfully defended his title twice in 2013.

But after a bruising and controversial split-decision victory over Johny Hendricks on Nov. 16, the Montreal fighter hinted at retirement in a cryptic post-fight interview in the cage that included a reference to unexplained personal issues and his need to step away from the sport.

Then, on Dec. 13, St-Pierre vacated his title and announced an indefinite hiatus from the Octagon, citing the pressures of being champion.

Georges St-Pierre THE CANADIAN PRESS

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You are on the threshold of a spectacular breakthrough. Which only goes to show that when you focus on a goal and follow up on it consistently, you can be a success. But don't get too full of yourself.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You need a change of direction and the planets will see that you get it. But don't worry. You will like what the next few weeks bring your way very much indeed.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You are who you are for a reason. If you stop wasting time fantasizing about who you would like to be and focus on doing a better job of who you are, you will soon be both successful and happy.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Your problems are not as bad as you think, so quit worrying. Cosmic activity in your opposite sign of Capricorn will bring relationship matters to a head over the weeks, but there is no need to panic. You'll survive.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
You may be tempted to change something that has worked for years, but is that a good idea? There is every possibility that you will go too far and change things in a revolutionary rather than an evolutionary way.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Play to your strengths and don't let what others are doing affect you in any way. There are some things you do better than most and those are the things you should be focusing on.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
If you have been taking a loved one for granted, this could be a tricky day. Somehow you need to convince them that your feelings are still the same but it will take more than just words.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Something important is about to happen and chances are you will enjoy it. Most likely it will have something to do with your social life, so get out into the world and smile big!

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You may come into money over the next few days but it would be wrong to count on it to get you out of trouble. The only way you are going to improve your financial situation is to cut back on your commitments.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
As cosmic activity in your sign reaches a peak over the new year period, you'll have to deal with situations that in the past you've tried to avoid. The good news is solutions can be found, but you've got to act now.

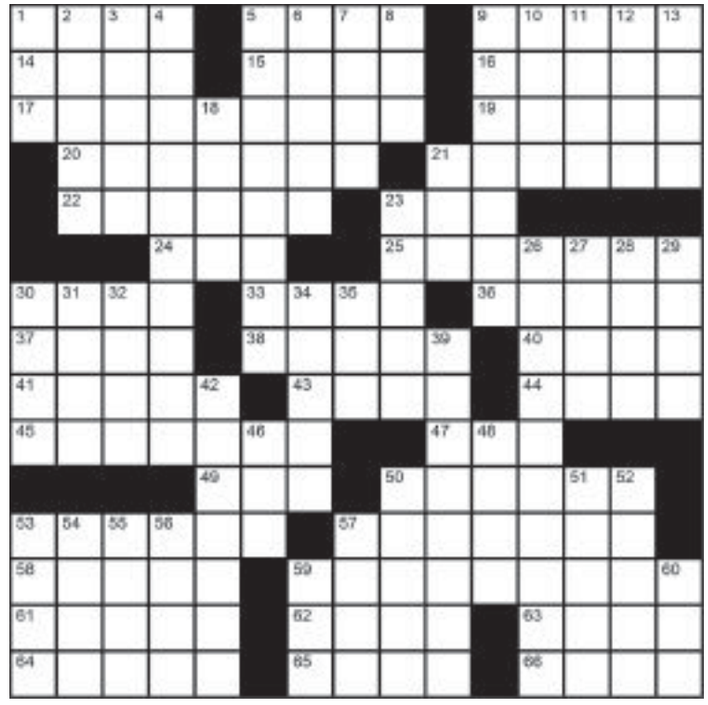
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
If your present approach to a problem is not working then clearly you need to tackle it from a different angle. Some people say you're too inflexible, too set in your ways to change. Prove them wrong.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Pay attention to what loved ones tell you over the next 24 hours because they can see something that you missed. If you listen to what they say and act on their advice, it could save you trouble. **SALLY BROMPTON**

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

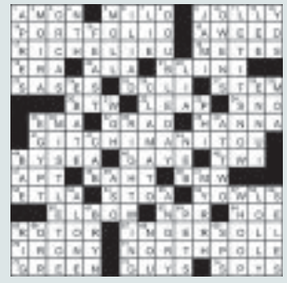
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Pasta, e.g.
5. 17th Greek letters
9. Mother-of-pearl
14. __ code
15. Nobleman
16. Once more
17. December 26th significance: 2 wds.
19. Rene of movies
20. Be drifting alone at sea ...but suddenly become joyful!: 2 wds.
21. Slightly adjusts
22. Accompaniment
23. Musical fifth note, variantly
24. Exclaimed "That hurts!", say
25. Shopping: Door-__ special
30. George Michael's '80s group!
33. Architect Mr. Saarinen
36. France's longest river
37. Rush
38. Pilotless aircraft
40. Gift Tag: To and __
41. Nimbi
43. Prince of Wales' motto, Ich __ (I Serve)
44. Dick Tracy's beloved, __ Trueheart
45. '50s TV series about a Quebec family, "La famille __"
47. Best, __-rated
49. Fee-fi-fo-__
50. North or South, in The States
53. Neil Young song: 2 wds.
57. Subscriber's extension
58. Wickerworker's willow
59. Traditional pudding of Newfoundland: 2 wds.
61. Billy Bob Thornton flick, "The Man Who __ There" (2001)
62. 'Myth' suffix
63. National Velvet author Ms. Bagnold
64. Tiffs
65. Foundation
66. Lines of travel, for short

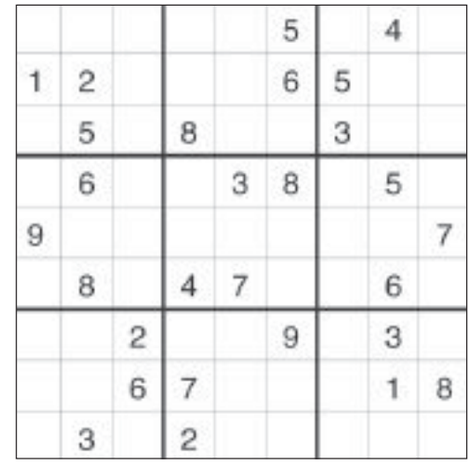
Down
1. Taxi
2. Sprang up
3. T. __ (Some dinosaurs)
4. __-__, Quebec (Former PM Brian Mulroney's birthplace)
5. Viewed as
6. "In case you __ noticed..."
7. Toward the mouth
8. Slick
9. Arctic whale having a spiral tusk
10. Chill
11. House, in Havana
12. Board game
13. Biblical grandson
18. Sugar substitute, Sweet'_ __
21. Maple Leafs, on scoreboards
23. Elegant biscuit
26. Ski slope surface sometimes: 2 wds.
27. Contract
28. God of love in Greek mythology
29. Sleep stages, commonly
30. Gift __
31. Transport stuff
32. Prefix to 'phobia' (Fear of heights)
34. Canadian fashion designer Mr. Morali-oglu
35. French queen's mate
39. Mire
42. Attempts
46. Amusing
48. __-dokey
50. Manet painting contemporary
51. Razz
52. 1966 Michael Caine film
53. Awesomenesses!
54. Office request [acronym]
55. Marge's daughter
56. Prince Michael of __ (Queen Elizabeth's cousin)
57 Costa __
59. Taradiddle
60. Hose-using rescue units, for short

Dec. 24th's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



Dec. 24's Sudoku

3	9	1	7	8	4	2	6	5
8	2	7	5	3	6	4	1	9
5	6	4	2	9	1	3	8	7
1	7	5	3	6	2	9	4	8
6	8	9	1	4	7	5	2	3
4	3	2	9	5	8	1	7	6
2	5	8	4	7	9	6	3	1
7	1	3	6	2	5	8	9	4
9	4	6	8	1	3	7	5	2

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